



Canadian International School of Egypt
HRT3M- World Religions
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2.3 Hindu Visions of God
(b) Vishnu

Incarnate Stories

1. **Matsya**, the **fish**, appeared in the **Satya Yuga**. The Fish Incarnation is the first incarnation of Vishnu. Lord Vishnu takes the form of a fish to take a king to the new world along with one of every single species of plants and animals from the world's largest cyclone. What we live in now is the new world, where the Lord traveled, carrying everything from the old, destroyed world.
2. **Kurma**, the **tortoise**, appeared in the **Satya Yuga**. The tortoise Incarnation is the second incarnation of Vishnu. When the devas and asuras were churning the ocean in order to get the nectar of immortality, the mount Mandara they were using as the churning staff started to sink and Lord Vishnu took the form of a tortoise to bear the weight of the mountain.
3. **Varaha**, the **boar**, appeared in the **Satya Yuga**. The Boar incarnation is the third incarnation of Vishnu. He appeared in order to defeat Hiranyaksha, a demon who had taken the Earth (Prithvi) and carried it to the bottom of what is described as the cosmic ocean in the story. The battle between Varaha and Hiranyaksha is believed to have lasted for a thousand years, which the former finally won. Varaha carried the Earth out of the ocean between his tusks and restored it to its place in the universe.
4. **Narasimha**, the **half-man/half-lion** appeared in the **Satya Yuga**. The Man-Lion Incarnation is the fourth incarnation of Vishnu. When the demon **Hiranyakashipu** acquired a boon from **Brahma**, which gave him inordinate power, Lord Vishnu appeared in the form of half-man/half-lion, having a human-like torso and a lower body, but with a lion-like face and claws. Now, Hiranyakashipu had thought well before wishing for a boon. He asked for a boon that no man, god, or deva could kill him; he should neither be killed at day nor night; neither indoors nor outdoors; neither on earth nor space and neither animate nor inanimate. Hiranyakashipu could not be killed by human, deva or animal, Narasimha is neither one of these, as he is a form of Vishnu incarnate as a part-human, part animal. He comes upon Hiranyakashipu at twilight (when it is neither day nor night) on the threshold of a courtyard (neither indoors nor out), and puts the demon on his thighs (neither earth nor space). Using his sharp nails (neither animate nor inanimate) as weapons, he disembowels and kills the demon.

5. **Vamana**, the dwarf, appeared in the **Treta Yuga**. The fourth lineal descendant of Hiranyakashyap, named **Bali**, through his devotion and penance defeated Indra, the god of firmament, humbled other gods and extended his authority over the three worlds. All the gods appealed to Lord Vishnu for protection and He became manifest in His Dwarf Avatar of Vaman for the purpose of restraining Bali. Once when this king was making a great religious offering, Lord Vishnu in the form of Vaman appeared before him in the company of other Brahmins. Bali was extremely pleased to see a holy man with such a diminutive form and promised to give him whatever he should ask. Lord Vishnu asked only for as much land as he could measure by three steps. Bali laughingly agreed to grant the boon of three steps. Lord Vishnu as dwarf stepped over heaven in first stride and netherworld in the second stride. Then he asked Bali where can he put his third step . Bali realized that Vamana was Vishnu incarnate and he was going to take the Earth in his third stride. He offered Vamana to put his third step on his head. Vamana did so and thus blessed Bali marking him as one of the few immortals blessed by Vishnu. Then out of respect to Bali's kindness and his grandfather Prahlad's great virtues, he made him the ruler of pathala, the subterranean region. Bali is believed to have ruled **Kerala** and **Tulunadu**. He is still revered there as the king of prosperity and remembered and called on before the harvesting season.

6. **Parashurama**, Rama with the axe, appeared in the **Treta Yuga**. Parashurama a Brahmin, the sixth avatar of Vishnu, belongs to the Treta yuga, and is the son of Jamadagni and Renuka. Parashu means axe, hence his name literally means Rama-of-the-axe. He received an axe after undertaking a terrible penance to please **Shiva**, from whom he learned the methods of warfare and other skills. Parashurama is said to be a "Brahma-Kshatriya" (with the duties between a **Brahmana** and a **Kshatriya**), the first warrior saint. His mother is descended from the Kshatriya Suryavanshi clan that ruled **Ayodhya** and Lord **Rama** also belonged to. A Haihaya King **Kartavirya Arjuna** (Sahasrarjuna - purportedly with a thousand arms) and his army visited Jamadagni, a Brahmin sage, who fed his guest and the whole army with his divine cow Kamadhenu. The king demanded the magical cow. Jamadagni refused because he needed the cow for his religious ceremonies. King Kartavirya Arjuna (Sahasrarjuna) took the cow forcibly and devastated the ashram. Angered at this, Parashurama killed the king's entire army and, after cutting each one of his thousand arms, the king himself with his axe. As a revenge, the King's sons killed Jamadagni in Parashurama's absence. Furious at his father's murder, Parashurama killed all sons of Sahasrarjuna and their aides. His thirst for revenge unquenched, he went on killing every adult Kshatriya on earth, not once but 21 times, filling five ponds with blood. These are the actions which highlight his warrior characteristics. Ultimately, his grandfather, Richeek Rishi, appeared and stopped him.

7. **Rama**, Ramachandra, the prince and king of **Ayodhya**, appeared in the **Treta Yuga**. Rama is one of the most commonly adored gods in **Hinduism** and is known as an ideal man and hero of the epic **Ramayana**. Rama defeated and killed the king of **Lanka**, **Ravana** for capturing and imprisoning his wife **Sita** in the **Ashoka Vatika** [lit. Ashoka Garden] in Lanka.

8. **Balarama** is considered as the eight avatar as per south Indian belief and Krishna as the ninth. As per the North Indian belief, Krishna is the eighth avatar^[citation needed] According to the **Bhagavata Purana**, Balarama is said to have appeared in the **Dwapara Yuga** (along with Krishna) as an incarnation of **Ananta Shesha**. **Krishna** (meaning 'dark coloured' or 'all attractive') appeared in the **Dwapara Yuga** along with his brother **Balarama**. Krishna is one of the most commonly worshipped deities in the Hindu faith and is also counted as an avatar of Vishnu by the majority of **Vaishnava** movements. He is also a significant character in the epic of **Mahabharata**. Krishna delivered **Bhagwad Gita** on the battlefield of the **Battle of Kurukshetra** to **Arjuna**. He, like Rama, is also known for his bravery in destroying evil powers throughout his life. He is usually depicted as playing the flute (murali), indicating spread of the melody of love to people.

9. **Krishna**, the eighth son of Devaki and Vasudev, is believed to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. **Buddha** the ascetic prince is also listed as an avatar of **Vishnu** in many Hindu scriptures including **Bhagavata Purana**, **Bhavishya Purana**, **Narasimha Purana** etc.[8][9] **Kali Yuga** sets in; in this age, the true devotion to Vedas was replaced by empty rituals.

10. **Kalki** ("Eternity", or "time", or "The Destroyer of foulness"), who is expected to appear at the end of Kali Yuga, the time period in which we currently live. The tenth and the last avatar of Vishnu, Kalki, is yet to appear. This avatar will appear seated on a white horse with a drawn sword blazing like a comet. He shall come finally to destroy the wicked, to restart the new creation and to restore the purity of conduct in people's lives. Kalki will move with a 'great speed', on a 'Big' 'White' 'horse' with a 'sword' in his hand. This description also comments on the astrological facts with regard to the planetary positions at the birth of Kalki i.e. Moon in Dhanishtha (Very swift, Most Famous, the richest) (Aquarius sign) ("Great Speed" of action & thoughts), Sun in swati, the only nakshatra associated with sword nakshatra, Jupiter in Purva Ashadha nakshatra ["Horse-Sagittarius sign", "the invincible" "early victory"], Ascendant Lord in Purva ashadha Nakshatra ["Horse" and Early Victory significance], Saturn exalted in Libra ["Justice" & "balance" & "sword"] and Ketu (lord of horse headed Ashwini) exalted in Scorpio ["Big & White Horse"]. Birth year can be derived from Jupiter, Saturn and Ketu; Sun can give the birth month, moon birth day and finally ascendant lord the birth hour.